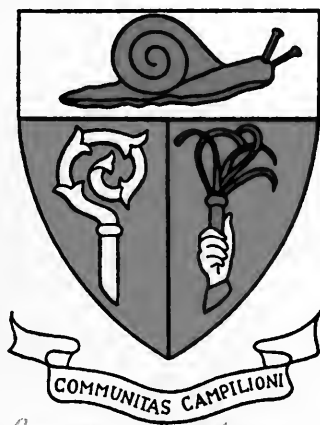


1418



GIOVANNI CENZATO

The Art and History of CAMPIONE D'ITALIA



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[Campione, # Giofina Centonze, # n.d.]







To speak of Campione, this tiny bit of Italy left outside the border, one may risk to be taken for a «drummer» working for a well known Casino. This is however, a risk which may be faced easily when one's conscience is at peace; there is so much history, such a wonderful and spontaneous flourishing of art in Campione, that it would be ridiculous to harbour scruples about spreading the name of a lovely village merely because a gaming house is there. A matter which has never required advertising and to which one might even recognize a certain social value.

Does not Good sometimes result from Evil? I remember that, during one of my wanderings as a journalist, I visited Fontanellato, near Parma, where, besides the magnificent Sanvitali Castle with its famous frescoes by «Il Parmigianino», there is a National Orphanage, built with offerings from all Italy by a Franciscan Friar, Father Mazzetti, now deceased. It is an imposing building and a truly great work of piety, and I remember asking the priest, «But how, Father, did you find the mo-



ney for all this? where did it come from?» He gave me a cunning answer, «My dear sir» he said «the Church does not live off Saints! it lives off sinners».

The sinners very often, repenting their guilty lives, leave their belongings to the Church thus raising from the ashes of their wishes sparkles of Charity and Love.

Campione then, with no secondary finality, is an oasis of natural beauty, a stop on an itinerary of the finest, and one which presents a widely known peculiarity, that which requires the traveller leaving any place in Italy to provide himself with a passport in order to reach a corner of this same Italy. Because Campione is in Italy, called *Campione d'Italia*, it is tied to Italy as regards political sovereignty but to Switzerland in all the aspects of civic life, both public and private. These aspects are the ones that immediately strike one's eye, and must be admitted, are the most pleasant. Switzerland is a country for which I have the deepest affection. She has been praised by poets and when Mendelssohn charged Goethe with having dedicated to her only a few tired lines, the musician was wrong, for Goethe saw in the Rhine Falls at Schaffhausen «the sources of the Ocean» even if those same Falls raised only indifference in Madame de Staël. Victor Hugo, «the Lord of Declaration», wrote that Providence created the mountains, God the people. Foscolo called Switzerland

holy, while Stendhal, Byron and Dickens dedicated to her lyrics of great beauty. But perhaps Switzerland never noticed.

By her severity, her austerity, her spirituality, she appears more than a State a conscience. Her wars — wars of revolt never of conquest — fought in the name of that freedom which found in Rousseau its complete ideal, and in William Tell its figuration of the popular hero, have formed her, long since, into that wisdom and well-being which are the envy of all.

Her socialism was not rising from the ruin of the bourgeoisie. (Filippo Turati, once leader of the Italian Socialism, was right in saying that one cannot socialise debts and poverty...). Zweig, who was unable to resist that moral atom-bomb which is war and whose death was due to dejection, found in Switzerland the one country able to give him that «safe world» which he had regretted by those most distressed and clear words in his «World of Yesterday». Faithful to a democracy that gives every citizen a right to develop his capacities to the full without limitations imposed by difference of class, category or ambition, Switzerland has been able to reach a high level of civil progress which spiritually and ethically finds its expression by the love of science, of Nature, of kindness, charity and tolerance, while economically it is shown by the richness of the Nation and the wellbeing of her citizens.



St. Ambrose, in a fresco by unknown author, kept in Campione.



View of Campione. In the background the bridge of Melide.

Good will, industriousness and hard work replace the total lack of raw materials and for all that same lack, we have seen Switzerland lead the world in the industry of watchmaking, a unique and characteristic example. Perhaps she has one raw material and that is worth more than her sky, her mountains, her wonderful views reaching the loftiness of the great mystery of Creation, that one thing is the «*esprit suisse*», that grafting flower which blossoms from three cultures so different, and without disparaging any, succeeds in distinguishing itself from them whilst applying itself, always with much success, to the moral, social and political thoughts which enliven all problems of education.

Campione has long breathed of these traditions. This morsel of Italy is Italian to the core, but it is a little Italian boy wearing a Swiss costume.

How and why this little village on the lake of Lugano, entirely surrounded by Swiss territory, remained Italian, living its political life as the rest of Italy, is a strange story... one of those queer intricacies of fate.

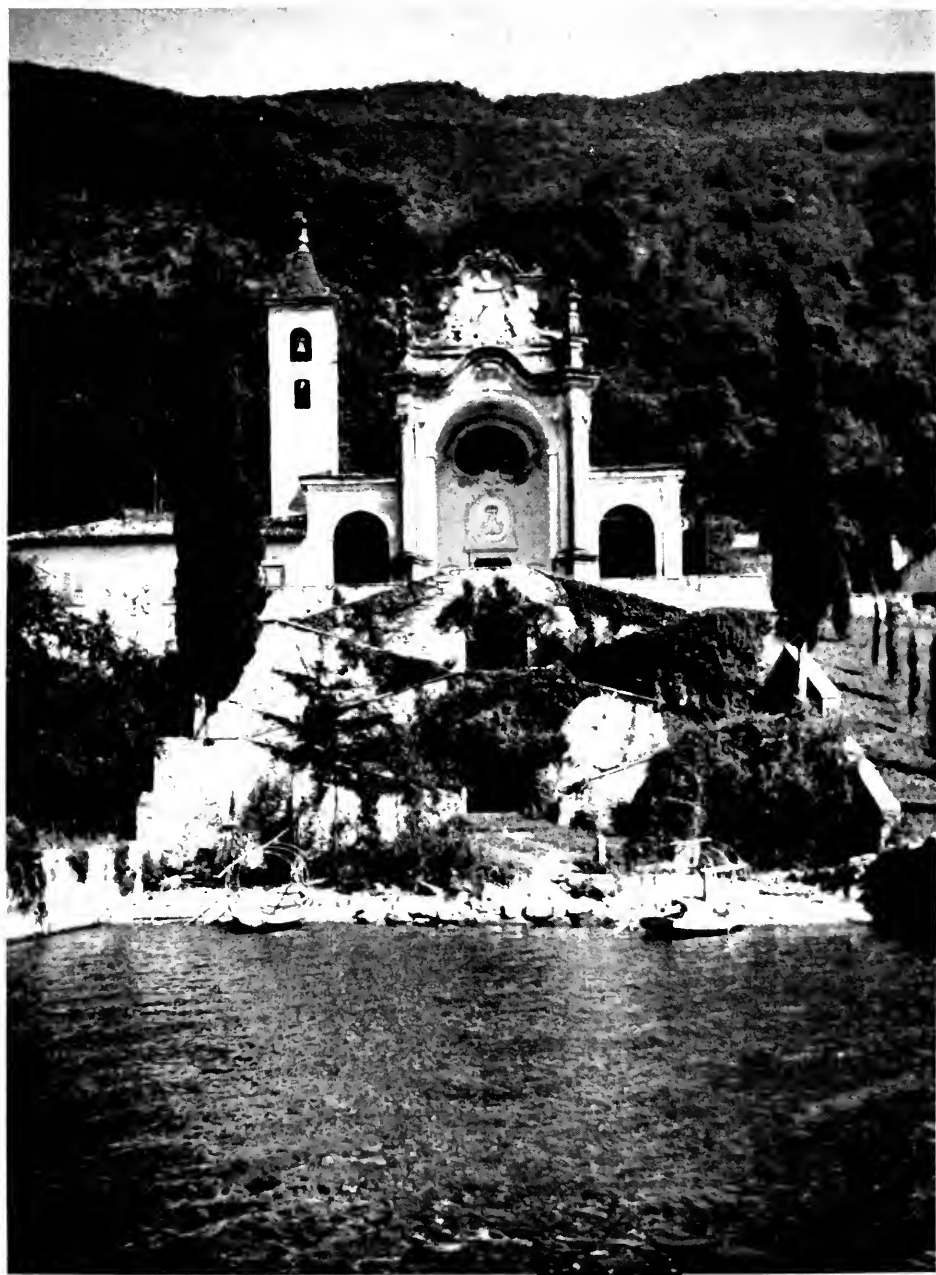
What artisan could weave the tapestry which life embroiders around us, mysteriously and unconceivably far from our knowledge? On the boat we are sailing there is always an unknown sailor whose name is Destiny, to whom we are never allowed to ask the course. Then one day, a man has an idea, quite a personal thought; it may be a matter of

conscience, but that thought alters the future of thousands of generations for centuries and centuries. How did a certain Totone, Lord of Campione, have the idea of letting all his land and properties to the Church? We shall not wrong him by considering him as a sinner who, at the moment of appearing before the Great Judge, begs to get a spiritual concession. Certainly he has been during his life, a trader, he may have bought and sold and been lucky in his dealings and have had good reasons for leaving all his holdings, which included the whole of Campione, lands and houses, to the Ambrosian Basilica in Milan, or, more precisely, to the Abbots of St. Ambrose's Basilica.

This act anyway marks the beginning of the ecclesiastic domination of Campione which was to last over one thousand years, Totone having died in A.D. 777.

The Ambrosian domination of Campione is reflected in its coat of arms, a shield divided into three sections: a Pastoral Staff, symbol of the dignity of St. Ambrose (Patron of Milan) as Bishop: a cudgel recalling the thrashing the Saint had given the Arians, finally a snail after the nickname given to the men of Campione who, being for the most part artists, were accustomed, when leaving the village, to carry with them their families and goods (*omnia mea mecum porto*).

Long before this, Rome, at the dawn of her empire, worried about defending her frontiers against



*The Sanctuary of the «Madonna dei Ghirli» in Campione.
National Monument*



St. Zeno. Bas-relief by Bonino da Campione (XV th century)

the Rhaetians who were pushing south in search of milder climates and more fertile lands, saw suitable key-point of that defence in the spot where Campione now lies; a spot which was protected on three sides by the mountains, and on the fourth by the waters of the lake. Hence there arose the castle of Campilio or Campilionum, a name, it seems, derived from « Campi Lyei » that is « Fields of Bacchus ». They must have been well off as to wine, and wine justifies even the twists in History! It is probable, although no documentary evidence of this exists, that when its strategic importance was a thing of the past, the rock was given in fief to some Roman governor who, with his family, guests, and serfs founded a little community which lived by fishing and agriculture.

History unfortunately is often a mixture of reality and imagination... Let us therefore imagine that the place no longer being a strong-point the military organisation yielded to a civilian one; around the castle, houses were built and a village soon clustered about the manor.

This apparently is the origin of Campione. If it is not so, I cannot be blamed, I was not there... As a journalist, I must do my best to gather what information has been handed down by others. It may be that I arrived a little too late.

If matters had stayed always so, Campione perhaps would still be a village, like the others on the lake. living on timber trading, fishing and may be on

a watch factory. However, the Longobards led by Alboin came from the north to reduce the Italic people to bond-slaves, without civil or military rights. But there came from Heaven a light of salvation enlightening both victors and vanquished; the result being their conversion to the Christian religion. Their contact with this Light with a religion that had its root in the equality of Man, softened the character of those barbarians and produced a fusion, a co-existence which resolved itself into the most different forms; among them were the « donations » to the Church, made to spread the faith and as gestures of Christian charity.

Totone's gift originates from just such a change of habits, as does also the juridical recognition of the donation by the Emperor Lothar who turned his right of property on the Campione estate into a right of sovereignty. Campione thus became, more or less, a very small independent State a true and proper fief recognized by all authorities.

Throughout the Middle Ages round this fief raged the struggles which placed in power, or overthrew, small but ambitious nobles, none of whom dared or managed to seize Campione.

In 1512 the Swiss, owing to their participation in the Holy League led by Pope Julius II, succeeded in strengthening their position in the Tessin Canton, without noticing — or pretending not to notice — that they had taken over Campione as



Fresco in the Sanctuary of the «Madonna dei Ghirli» in Campione: «the Virgin's life», by unknown author (XII century).

well. It was noticed however by the Abbots of St. Ambrose and they protested. Hence litigations and disputes which were finally concluded by a concession from the Swiss of a «free passage», a concession that lasted until 1797 when the religious Corporations were abolished in Lombardy.

In spite of the struggles and disputes the fief of the Ambrosian Abbey managed to receive tokens of merit and privileges from Emperors and Popes,, surviving, in precarious neutrality, the fierce struggle between Milan and Como during the XIIth century, living with difficulty through the fall of Feudalism, owing its independence substantially to its monastic overlords.

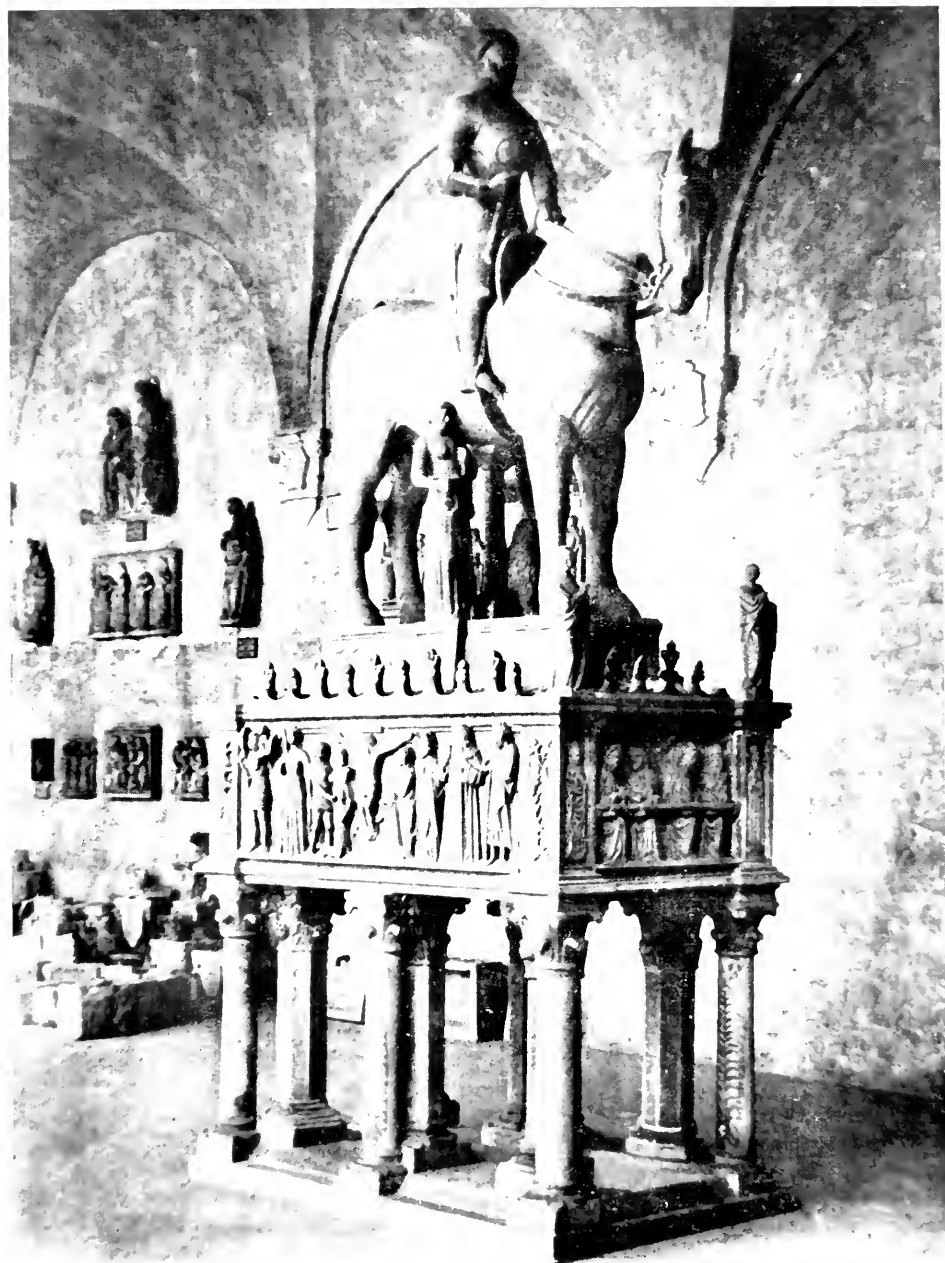
The old archives are filled with documents even relating to minor matters of every day life showing the care by which this independence was defended from one side and respected from the other.

In 1549 a serious crime was committed in Campione; an inn-keeper was murdered and his wife cruelly wounded. The criminals were discovered and the Captain of Lugano sent his soldiers to arrest them. Immediately Ferrante Gonzaga, Governor of Milan, ordered the Captain to leave the culprits where they were, complaining of the procedure and ordering him to refrain from such arbitrary acts «being Campione a fief directly subject to the Abbots of St. Ambrose».

But in 1797 Napoleon, by the terms of the Treaty of Campoformio, assigned the former Austrian ter-



The Sanctuary of the «Madonna dei Ghirli».



MIL. LX - Burnabo Visconti's tomb and equestrian statue by Bonino from Campione (1370-1380).

ritory of Lombardy to the new French republic, and Campione was among the lands to be transferred. In that year two French officers called on the Vicar-Designate of the little fief, and informed him that the independence of Campione was at an end, and that the property had passed to the Fiscal authorities.

Protests were of no avail: privileges which had been held with comparative ease for centuries were swept away in a single day. Campione became a dependence of Como who however, allowed her to remain Italian territory in a foreign land.

It would not be right to say that the Swiss have always agreed to the destiny of Campione. In 1815 through the convention discussed by a Congress of Nations that followed the Waterloo defeat, they tried to obtain possession of Campione, but their efforts were frustrated.

To the Congress of Vienna Switzerland sent its diplomatic representative, Pictet de Rachemont who however obtained no results.

At the Congress of Paris, the same Pictet was given, among other mandates that of obtaining for Switzerland possession of Campione. But once more without success.

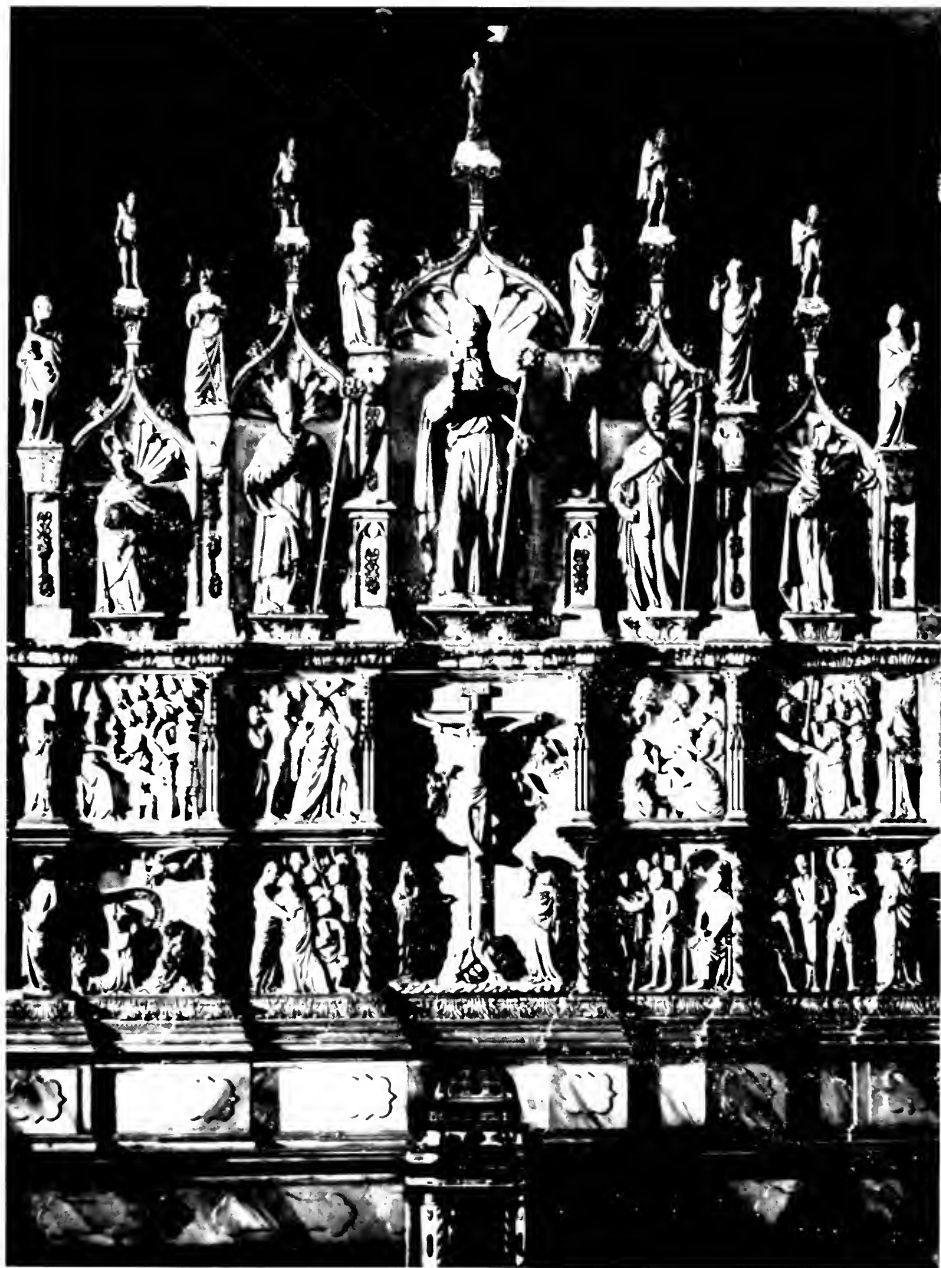
If an oddness of this kind had been wilfully caused, a whole series of disputes and wars would have probably followed. In the case of Campione everything just happened without much noise. Papers spoke instead of guns, which is one way of saying

that if papers are worth little, weapons are worthless, an Campione remained just like a small bubble of air in a sheet of glass...

Undoubtedly the consequences of such a situation are still somewhat strange. Taking the boat at Porto Ceresio (Italy) after going through the customs, one says «I am in Switzerland». But while you watch the mountains that enclose the lake and believe that you see — or imagine so — the trails used by the patriots of the Italian «Risorgimento», while you think, first of all, of the daring Dottesio, while you imagine you hear, coming from Capolago, the echo of passionate disputes as to the difference between freedom and independence raised by Guerazzi at the «Tipografia Elvetica» when he made his furtive visit there to discuss the reprinting of his «Siege of Florence», after touching three or four piers, a neat pretty village appears, and standing by the landing board you see two Italian «carabinieri» conversing quietly who merely glance at you.

Still Italy? Yes, this is Campione.

The mountain rising above the houses is so steep that it seems to have stopped just in time to avoid pushing them all into the lake, and it is a Swiss mountain. The last house on the south side of the village marks the border, its opposite building to the north leans against the mountain and one can go no farther. The lake in front is Swiss. A village in a vice then, an imaginary vice which is



MILAN - Marble altarpiece in the church of St. Eustorgio.
Work of the Masters of Campione.

not quite imaginary because it causes the little town quite a few fancy annoyances.

As to customs Campione is Switzerland, thus the inhabitants must buy all that they need at Lugano spending Swiss currency, or in Italy paying customs duty at the Swiss border.

Once a man of Campione went to Italy to buy a coat, and to avoid the duty, wore it on his way back. The officer at the Swiss customs, who had evidently kept an eye on him, greeted him «Welcome back!... I say, that's not the suit you were wearing this morning... Will you step in the office, please?».

The inhabitants of Campione may go to Lugano and the neighbouring Swiss villages without a passport while they must have one to go to Italy «because they must travel through Swiss territory».

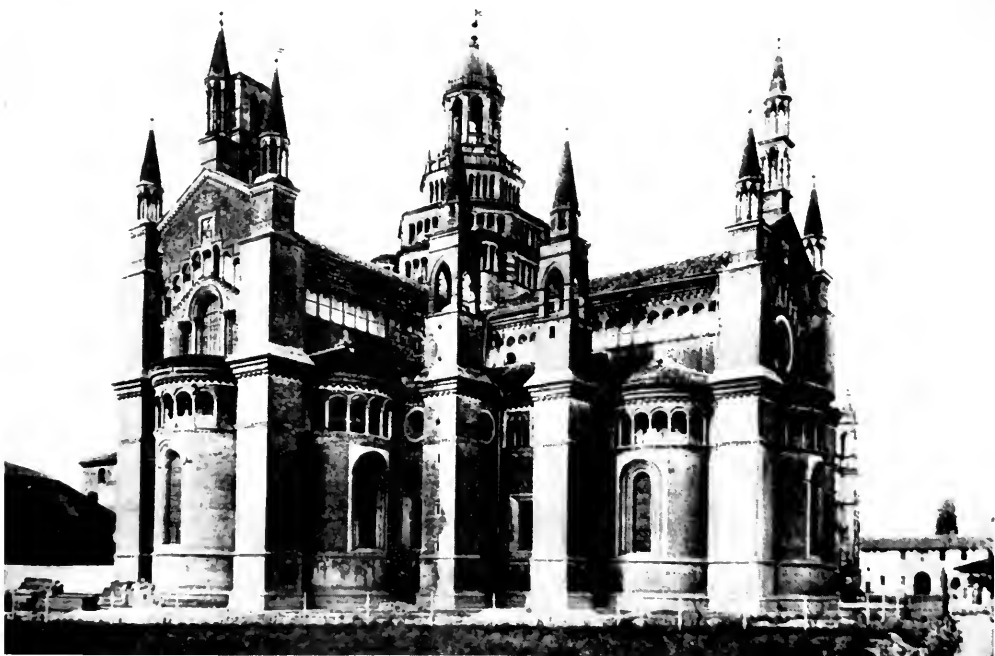
Many other procedures are required here by the international laws, a very serious matter indeed, but their application in such a small world looks funny. The international laws, for instance, want to know: «Which is the armed force, military or civil, that may be sent to Campione from Italy? May Switzerland limit the number of these forces by refusing their passage through Swiss territory?». The answer is yes. The transit of armed forces is effected in the general spirit of the special convention agreed upon. Thus the men get on the boat with their weapons, hand them over to the



MODENA - Facade of the Cathedral (XIIth century). Work of the Masters of Campione.



MONZA - Facade of the Cathedral (XIth century). Work of the Masters of Campione.

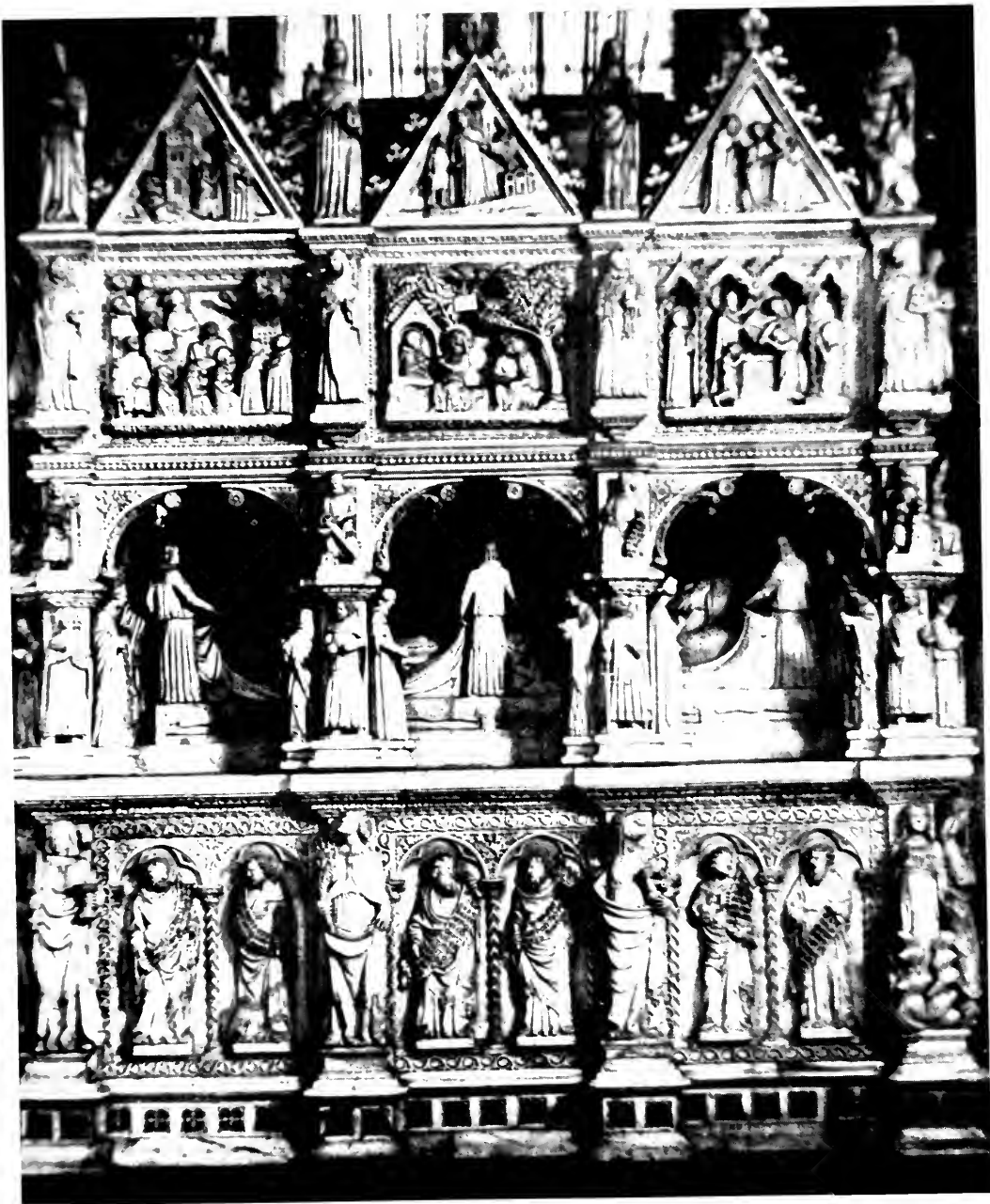


Rear side of the Chartreuse at Pavia (XIIth and XIth centuries).

Swiss and receive them back on arrival at Campione. The police patrolling Campione to day are mandant. Every time one of these police go to Italy made up of 10 « carabinieri » including the com- he has to undergo the severe, fair but nevertheless droll operation of disarmament and rearming. It reminds me, speaking of big laws in small States, when I happened to visit San Marino; I learned that the very dignified waiter who served me at table, was the Foreign Minister of tha little Republic.

From an artistic point of view Campione is most interesting: much more than it seems when you judge it after its present elegance and luxury that reminds you somehow of the best resorts on the Riviera. There are no big hotels, but, for the tourist, Campione is quite efficiently equipped. It is above all so neat and clean, its modest yet appealing coquetry makes one wish to stop for ever enchanted by the silence, order and general sense of wellbeing. Cleanliness coming from that « Swiss flavour » I mentioned. This fragment of Italy soaked through centuries in Switzerland drew deeply from its surroundings while remaining its very soul Italian, faithful to the Motherland.

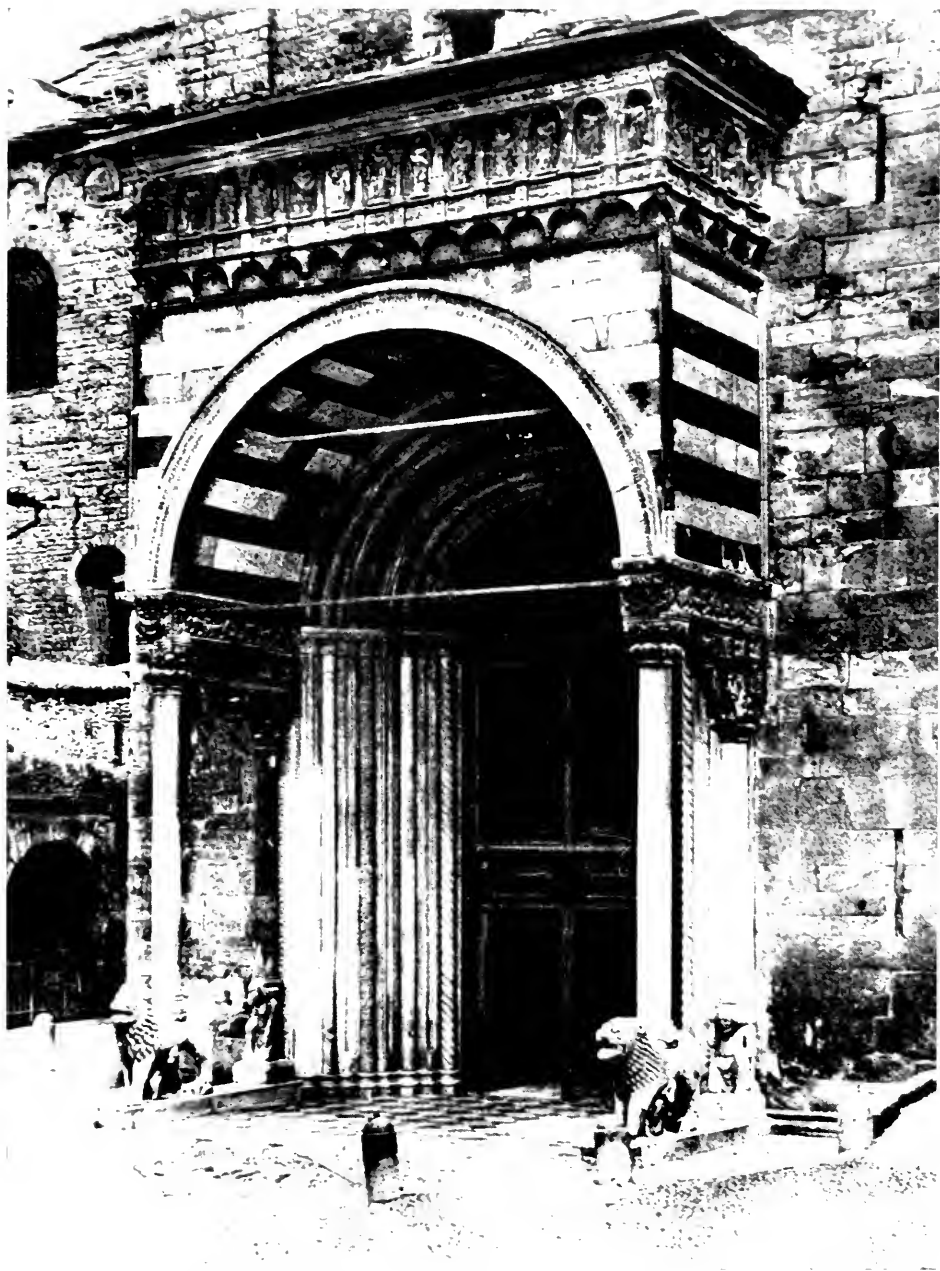
In the first World War, its population, then of 510 souls, gave 94 soldiers of whom 15 died. These figures cannot be forgotten, they have quite a meaning and constitute a demonstration of civic ambition that may well complete the neatness of



*PAVIA - Church of «San Michele in Ciel d'oro». St. Augustine's - rear side -
by Bonino da Campione.*

the village with its spotless walls (no scribbling, no hurrahs, not even for the cycling champion of the moment) where the order is perfect, where you cannot find a piece of paper on the ground. Indeed this is Switzerland, the same Switzerland that never allows a railwayman, a tramway man, an errand boy or a soldier, to be seen untidy as to uniform, Switzerland where even newsboys wear a uniform, and a true miracle, never shout. I once met a tourist back from Switzerland who had been much more impressed by the cleanliness of the butcher's chopping blocks, and by the fact every electric light switch, even in the most modest hotels had its neat glass base, than he had been by the magnificence of the Jungfrau... The same may be said of Campione. But the miracle which has defied the centuries, that still remains in this little village, that enlightens this idyllic scene in its rich surroundings is that of art. That of her sons, those «Masters» of Campione who spread through the world the joy and the glory of their art.

In Campione only three works reflect the wonderful cleverness of these men: The Basilica of St. Zenone, in the Romanesque style; The Oratory of St. Peter, built in 1326; and the well known Sanctuary of the «Madonna dei Ghirli». This last is dedicated to the Virgin of the Annunciation and the appellation of «Ghirli» (meaning Swallows in the local dialect) is mindful of the fact that the men of the village too, were migratory. This Sanctuary so



*BERGAMO - South portal of the church of «Santa Maria Maggiore»
by Giovanni from Campione (XIVth century).*



VERONA - Equestrian statue of Causignorio della Scala,
by Bonino da Campione (XIVth century).

lovely for all its smallness dates from the IXth century. The present building is, however, of the seventeenth century: its original structure was considerably modified by baroque adornments which, while enriching it with good sculptures and frescoes, impoverished it by the consequent loss of valuable paintings.

To trace the fountain-head of the art of the Campione «Masters», one must go back many centuries when Gothic architecture, started in Germany by Albert Magnus, first appeared in Italy. This architecture in its original form was unsuited to the character and spirit of Italian artists who were devoted to classical forms. Thus a fusion took place: and in this an important part, was played by the artists of Campione. These are miracles of spontaneity in Art which is always, in all its expressions, a translation and transformation of God's voice. Who taught these people of Campione to carve rough figures in their workshops? Who made them such tireless craftsmen and why are their sculptures so markedly expressive? They did not work for money and only within their limited horizon: their reputation, in those distant centuries, never overcoming the Tessin country. Later they would wander, as humble stonecutters, from one village to another, obeying now this now that master, this or that noble, but always leaving behind them the marks of their astonishing art. Then the news spread faster and further, reaching distant places

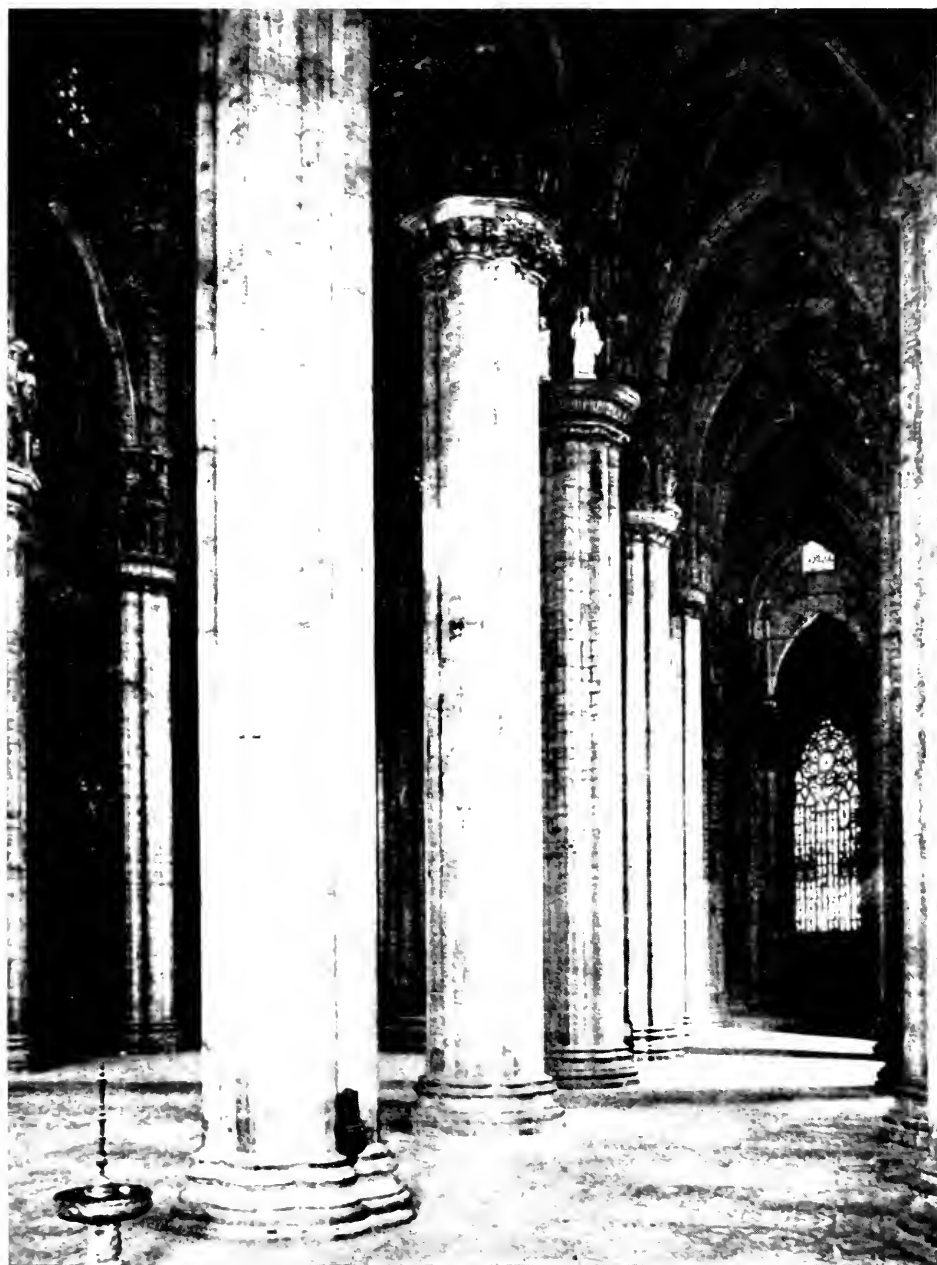
and the Campione «Masters» (called at first merely men of Campione) became for all «The Masters». For some centuries they were known only by that name in the gentle modesty of their time.

They were not working for men, but for the Lord God and Art, asking only a little payment as it appears from the archives of the «Builders» of the Cathedral in Milan, that they peopled with statues. It may well be said that Italy, and Europe itself, was enriched by their exquisite works.

We find them already in Milan when the town was rising from the ashes Barbarossa had reduced it to in 1162. Artists of Campione worked at the Cathedral in Modena for over three hundred years while Anselm and William of Campione raised «The Ghirlandina ».

Generations of Campione craftsmen worked at the Cathedral of Milan. This great temple had among its first architects, Marco da Friscone, a man of Campione who in turn, had help from his fellow villagers Jacopo da Fusina, Zeonio da Fusina and Bonino. It is pretty certain that the first drawing approved by Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Lord of Milan, was by Marco da Friscone.

No less important was the work of the Masters of Campione in the Cathedral at Monza finished in 1380, where the architect Matteo of Campione left immortal works such as the Baptistry, the Pulpit and the Facade (the Baptistry was later replaced by another by Pellegrini). Jacopo da Campione,



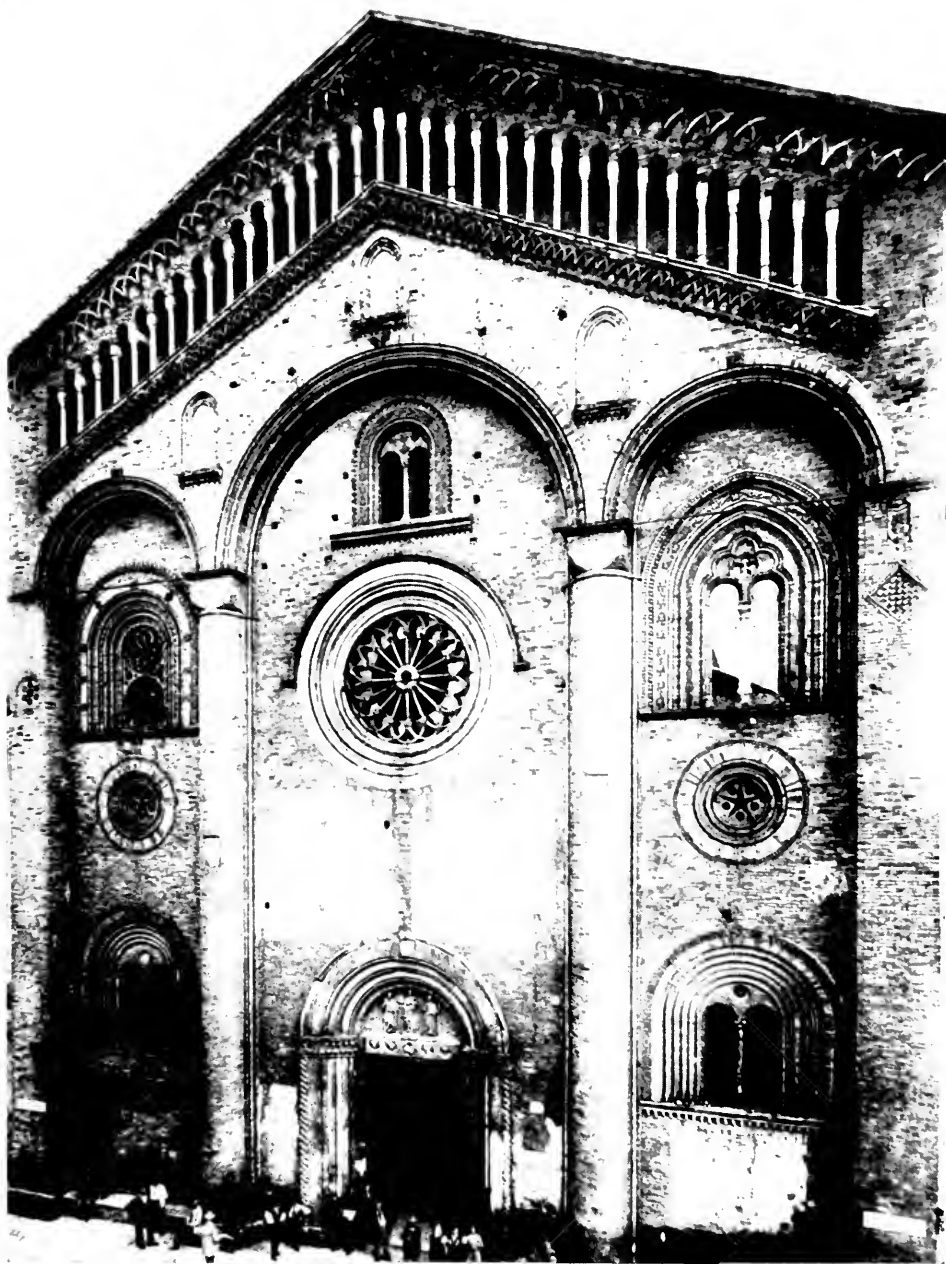
MILAN - Detail of the Dome (XIVth and XVth centuries)
by Marco from Campione and other «Masters»

Giovaanni Solari and Guiniforte worked on the facade of the Chartreuse at Pavia. The Solari family form a brilliant chapter in the history of Campione craftsmen. We find works by Christopher Solari, called the «Hunchback», in Milan — Santa Maria della Passione, in St. Ambrose's church and in the Cathedral where he carved an excellent statue of Adam.

His brother Andrea was a celebrated painter, a pupil of Gaudenzio Ferrari. He afterwards came under the influence of Leonardo da Vinci, in whose footsteps he followed with such effect that many of his works were attributed to Leonardo himself. In Milan he painted the portrait of Charles d'Amboise; in the Chateau of Gaillon in France he decorated a part of the altar and painted the frescoes in the chapel: while one of his works is to be seen in the new sacristy of the Chartreuse at Pavia.

Ugo da Campione built the church of St. Augustine in Bergamo while his son Giovanni constructed the wonderful doors of Santa Maria Maggiore in the same town. Pier Antonio Solari's name is linked with the great tower of the Kremlin of Moscow. Artists from Campione worked on the building of the Chartreuses at Chiaravalle, and the adjoining cloister near Milan. We may still admire on the Facade of Modena Cathedral, Guglielmo da Campione's sculptures representing scenes from the Old Testament.

Bonino da Campione carved the sarcophagus of Gio-



CREMA - Facade of the Cathedral (XIIIth century), work of the Masters of Campione.



*Facade of a church at Bollano (Lake of Como) built around the middle of XIVth century
by Giovanni from Campione*

vanni della Scala in the Scala Arches and the statue of Cansignorio, the successor of Martin II della Scala in Verona. His also is the tomb of Barnabo Visconti — the tomb is now in the Archaeological Museum in Milan — and the urn of Lanfranco Settala in the Church of St. Marco in the same town.

It can really be said that Campione was touched in its time by the divine grace as so many and famous artists were born there. They were born humble and devout and so remained through their lives.

They did not sign their works or signed them only with their christian name. Yet from these works to which artists of different intellect, studies and soul put their genius and hands, emanates a vast and perfect harmony.

How could it be that from the tenacious oppositions and bitter struggles of those centuries was born such a concordant beauty? How is it that to day such concord cannot be found in works which are the product of a single mind?...

Under this aspect and to the artist's eye and heart, Campione has the enchantment of a wonder land that allows us to forget even the paradoxes which men have brought there: Swiss customs rules, post office, telegraph, telephone and currency, all of them Swiss; Italian stamps selling for Swiss francs; all sorts of speculative materiality set up before a mystery of creative art, before a group of men who

marked the centuries without seeking profit, who travelled and worked together in a sort of ideal union, inspired only by superior beauty and carrying it to a constructive concord.

A village with no history, as a journalist called Campione, certainly having considered it only superficially. With no history of course, if the history of a village is made only by great events or by monumental signs of past grandeur. But History is also made out of small things that we must look for and know to interpret.

I think Campione belongs to Italy for its silent history, made up of ideals and hard work, and to the secondary Italy in the minor aspect of the Nation. Because Italy has two faces, one solemn and majestic in the splendid glory of her art, her great beauty and her richness of events; and that is Michael Angel's Italy; Italy of the Colosseum and of Santa Maria del Fiore; Italy that sends tourists into ecstasy and dictates poems to the brilliant imagination of men of letters. The other face speaks to the heart more than to the senses; conceals itself often in the country lanes; hides in the shadow of a farmhouse, is ever present in the ancient lonely squares of the little towns and you may even feel it when listening to a civic band playing before the village church.

Campione apart from its neatness which is typically Swiss, (a humorist once said that Switzerland's landscapes were made of porcelain and the first



*Particular of fresco in the Sanctuary of the «Madonna dei Ghirli» in Campione
(XIth century).*



Sanctuary of the «Madonna dei Ghirli». Particular of fresco (XIIth century).



Sanctuary of the «Madonna dei Ghirli». Particular of fresco (XIIIth century).

thing the Swiss do every morning is to wash them) is very Italian, it belongs to that provincial Italy that Robert Browning discovered when travelling in the Peninsula, and felt and praised it so much asking to become a citizen of Asolo where a memorial stone bears a verse from one of his poems: «Open my heart and written inside you will find Italy».

Certainly the signs of art in Campione are not so rich, yet they have a poetry of their own which makes the village the most ancient and privileged among those around the lake, including Lugano itself.

Look at the tiny church of St. Peter; a small Gothic stone tells you that it was built in 1326. Next to it a shield-of-arms is carved bearing the Lily of Florence, a fragment of a fresco an angel's head leads one to believe that the walls were once adorned by a well painted decoration. Visit the Cathedral (may be the word is too big for it), not an imposing building, but one of those churches however which at once address your soul to the ways of God. There are two tabernacles richly carved with foliage of the XVIth century, a relief of St. Zenone, the Patron Saint, fishing, the water overflowing the frame, a simplicity of working that shows how the artist's sentiment was stronger than the ambition of obtaining a result rigorously respondent to the design.

A memorial stone reproduces a long «Deed of

Exemption » granted to the people of Campione by the Duke Gian Galeazzo Sforza, Lord of Milan, No one can explain to the good people of Campione of to-day the story of that stone, yet they preserve it because they know that it is a sort of identity card for a land that has been Italian for centuries.

Let us go back for a moment to the Sanctuary of the « Madonna dei Ghirli » almost on the lake shore. There is a stairway going down to the water and its posture makes it half altar, half spiritual pier. If the notes by Malaguzzi Valeri, and by others who have studied the place are correct, the building must have been much greater and imposing in its architecture. There should have been large porticoes. Inside the temple, Isidoro Bianchi from Campione, by bright frescoes harmoniously composed and finely coloured, told the glories of the Virgin. A «Last Judgment» is most interesting for the magnificence of its conception and for certain audacities that are a pleasant surprise in the tradition. This fresco has in fact, Jesus seated in judgment in a strange pose so that the whole is far from the solemnity given to that subject by all the mediaeval artists, and particularly by Giotto who however placed hanging and the spit among the pains of Hell. Here the painters, Lanfranco and Filippo de Veris, have even put in the wheel. Other frescoes represent the Annunciation, soft coloured, expressed with great sweetness though a



Sanctuary of the «Madonna dei Ghirli». Fresco by Isidoro Bianchi (XV) 11th century).



*BERGAMO - Portal of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore (XIVth century)
by Giovanni from Campione.*

little feeble, but there is a man, dressed in red, of singular strength and beauty. There is another fresco representing the « Garden of Eden » attributed to « The Bramantino » (Bartolomeo Suardi from Milan) Bramante's pupil and founder of that school which Gaudenzio Ferrari and Luini followed (they say that some of the frescoes at the Sanctuary were by Luini himself).

One would be wrong however, in expecting to find in Campione an abundance of works and eloquent masterpieces. One must think of the halo of this holiness that is in the world and was born in Campione. Not really *only* in Campione...

Since the early Middle Ages all the upper Lombardy, between the two lakes, Como and Maggiore, has had a peculiar flourishing of masons, builders, and stonecutters, whom the Longobard Kings gathered in guilds continuing perhaps the lines of pre-existent classic corporations.

Liutprand's edict had to deal with these «Comacini» Masters whose characteristic was their systematic emigration in groups or singly. They also contributed to the diffusion of the Romanesque architecture which later turned from « Comacina » into «Lombard». It was an artistic fervour which lasted throughout the XIVth century and later partly changed the generic name of « Comacini » into « Campionesi ». Still remains the important part played by the Masters of Campione who opposed to the German Gothic architecture their classical

style. Later the name «Campionese» will gradually be dropped, but worthy and exquisite artists from north Lombardy and Campione itself will continue to spread the tradition that will last for centuries. The tree had really a wonderful bloom.

Let us mention Andrea Agostino Busti, called «The Bambaia», a Sculptor; Fusina, another Sculptor from Campione; Cristoforo Lombardo, also a Sculptor from Como; the Rodaris, Architects and Sculptors from Maroggia, the Solaris, already mentioned, a great family, who were masters in all the arts; and then Leone Leoni, a famous Sculptor from Menaggio; Pellegrino Tibaldi from the Valsolda, appointed Court Architect to St. Charles Borromeo.

Then a group of painters, Donato Lombardo, the Montorfano, Bernardino Luini, Marco d'Oggiono, the Lomazzo and the Morazzone.

They worked far from their home. In Venice Pietro and Tullio Lombardo were working as architects for many years. Baldassarre Longhena, from Bissone, worked in Genoa, Rome, Venice and Seville. Quite a few Architects in the Papal Rome were from Como and Campione. Carlo Maderno, from Bissone, Martino Longhi, from Viggiù, the Fontanas, from Melide, Francesco Borromini, from Bissone, all worked in Madrid, in Petersbourg, and in Moscow. The Campione Architects were even called to ensure the stability of Santa Sofia in Constantinople.

We like to think that this quiet village held in its past the seed of such flowering that was able to spread Italy's name throughout the world, and we cannot help blessing the name of that Totone, and perhaps his sins as well (if he had any) because by leaving his land to the Abbots of St. Ambrose he made Campione Italian, and Italians became those artists who worked with such fruitful modesty having no other ambition than that of making famous, more than their own name, their land.

Were it only for this group of great humble men, who from Campione and the neighbouring land wandered around the world almost unconsciously realising their great mission, for these men alone we can go to Campione being sure to enjoy an elevation of our soul, that same elevation coming from a visit to a land of miracles.

We can and must forget that in this lovely Campione, in this Eden that Nature made and men industrialized, there is a tree of Good and Evil represented by the Casino.

Be careful not to fall asleep under it like Adam did, who just for being asleep, let Eve eat the apple ten minutes before he did, thus giving her the ten minutes start that Woman held and still holds. That is why Woman walks ahead, and Man, alas, must always... follow!

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